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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Willie Nelson is considered a music legend and an American icon whose music and advocacy has entertained and inspired Illinoisans for five decades; and

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WHEREAS, Willie Nelson started his musical education at age six by studying mail-order music guides given to him by his grandparents; he wrote his first song at seven and played in a local Texas band two years later; Willie later joined his brother-in-law's band as its frontman; and

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WHEREAS, Willie Nelson moved to Vancouver, Washington where he recorded Leon Payne's "*Lumberjack*"; the song was plugged on the air, resulting in sales of 3,000; after the sale of "*Family Bible*," which became a hit for Claude Gray in 1960, Nelson moved to Nashville to try his luck in the country music industry; and

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WHEREAS, Willie Nelson's music demos were initially met with rejection by recording companies, but he tirelessly persevered; during this time, he wrote songs performed by other musicians, including "*Crazy*," which became a Top Ten pop crossover smash, and "*Funny How Time Slips Away*," which became a Top 40 country hit; and

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1 WHEREAS, Willie Nelson grew frustrated with the Nashville
2 music industry and retired to Austin, Texas; there, Nelson
3 realized that country music was popular with young rock fans as
4 well as the traditional country audience; he began performing
5 again, shedding the Nashville sound for a rock-and-roll
6 influenced outlaw country style; 1973's Shotgun Willie
7 evidenced Nelson's new musical style that defied the forms of
8 the Nashville music industry; and

9 WHEREAS, Willie Nelson gained complete creative control
10 over his music when he signed with Columbia Records in 1975;
11 "*The Red Headed Stranger*," his first album for Columbia, became
12 a huge hit; for the next five years, Nelson consistently
13 appeared on both the country and pop charts; and

14 WHEREAS, Willie Nelson's most successful year was 1978,
15 when he charted his first duet album with Waylon Jennings; this
16 collaboration spawned the popular song "*Mammas Don't Let Your
17 Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys*"; that same year, Nelson also
18 released "*Stardust*," an album spanning jazz, pop, country, and
19 folk styles and which spent almost ten years in the country
20 charts; and

21 WHEREAS, Willie Nelson continued to produce hits,
22 including a cover of Elvis Presley's "*Always on My Mind*," which
23 was a cross-over smash; "*Always on My Mind*," the album,

1 achieved quadruple-platinum status; and

2 WHEREAS, Willie Nelson goes beyond traditional country to
3 blend together a diversity of styles, including pop, swing,
4 jazz, honky tonk, rock & roll, folk, and the blues, into a
5 distinctive musical hybrid; most recently, Nelson joined with
6 jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and singer-songwriter Norah
7 Jones to pay musical tribute to the legendary Ray Charles with
8 the album "*Here We Go Again*"; and

9 WHEREAS, Willie Nelson has won major recognition for his
10 music, including 10 Grammys, 7 American Music Awards, and 9
11 Country Music Awards; he was inducted into the Country Music
12 Hall of Fame in 1993 and, on June 23, 2010, the Library of
13 Congress's National Recording Registry; and

14 WHEREAS, Willie Nelson branched out into film with
15 appearances in such movies as "*The Electric Horseman*" and
16 "*Honeysuckle Rose*"; for the latter movie's soundtrack, Nelson
17 wrote and performed what would become one of his signature
18 songs, "*On the Road Again*"; and

19 WHEREAS, Willie Nelson has been involved in countless
20 humanitarian causes, including raising funds for the victims of
21 natural disasters and disease and working towards peace among
22 all peoples and nations; and

1 WHEREAS, Willie Nelson worked with the State of Illinois
2 and performers John Mellencamp and Neil Young to organize the
3 first Farm Aid concert to increase awareness about the loss of
4 family farms and raise funds to keep farm families on their
5 land; the first Farm Aid concert was held on September 22, 1985
6 at Memorial Stadium on the campus of the University of Illinois
7 in Champaign; during its existence, Farm Aid has raised more
8 than \$37 million to promote a strong and resilient family farm
9 system of agriculture; and

10 WHEREAS, Willie Nelson was a regular performer at the
11 Illinois State Fair, most recently in 2001; fairgoers would
12 famously enjoy "Chili with Willie" as stipulated by Nelson in
13 his State fair contract; and

14 WHEREAS, On June 11, 2011, Willie Nelson is once again on
15 the minds of Illinoisans as he performs at the World Shooting
16 and Recreational Complex in Sparta as part of his Country
17 Throwdown tour; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
19 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
20 we designate June 11, 2011 as "Willie Nelson Day" in the State
21 of Illinois; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 delivered to Willie Nelson as a symbol of our respect and
3 esteem.